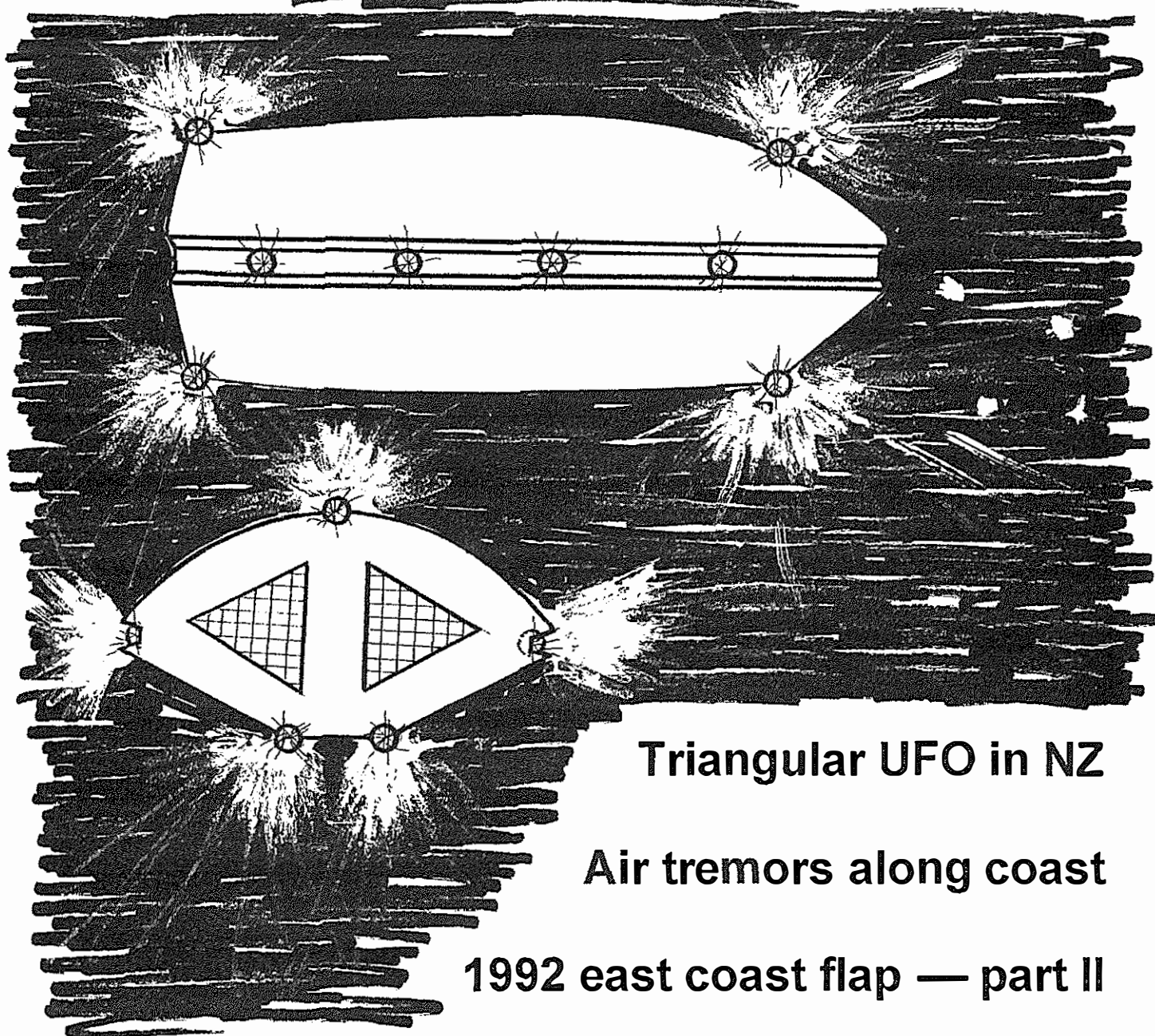


UFO *Reporter*

Quarterly Publication of UFO Research (New South Wales)

Volume 1, Number 3

September 1992



Triangular UFO in NZ

Air tremors along coast

1992 east coast flap — part II

UFOs over Sydney — Glenfield & Waverley

UFO Reporter

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Front cover: Close-up of UFO seen at Glenfield (9 July 1992).

Early days: Rosemary, George and me

Bryan Dickeson

I enjoy meeting people like Rosemary Decker. Rosemary has maintained a close, ongoing involvement with the UFO movement in the United States since the early 1950s. Way back then she was part of an extended circle of friends centred around the controversial UFO contactee George Adamski.

Now, Rosemary is the Historian for MUFON, providing them a vital link to those early days. She also maintains a very active interest in UFO abduction phenomena and abductee support groups. Rosemary visited Sydney recently and spoke to an evening meeting of UFO (NSW) members on 4 October 1992 (before speaking at the Sydney *UFO Expo* later the same month).

During that evening, Rosemary mentioned how she had been at George Adamski's Mount Palomar home the day he and a party of friends returned from George's first meeting with a 'Venusian' in the California Desert (Thursday 20 November 1952). She mentioned the excitement, the 'electricity' of the moment, when the first contact was retold to them. The incident, later recounted in the book *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (by G. Adamski and Desmond Leslie), helped launch Adamski and the contactee phenomenon onto the world stage.

Nowadays contactees are very much out of fashion, especially George Adamski, and especially in America. If you ever want to upset a serious American UFO investigator, just ask them about George Adamski — it hardly ever fails. Although George died in 1965, the opinions of UFO investigators are still greatly divided about the man and what he achieved for the subject.

When I meet someone like Rosemary Decker, it reminds me of the human side of the UFO phenomenon — incidents are brought much closer, made more 'alive'. They are no longer something 'I read about in a book, a long time ago'.

I have other reasons for liking Rosemary Decker, for I have sometimes ignored an earlier, family connection with Adamski. My parents ran an Adamski Correspondence Group in the mid-1950s and organised part of his 1959 world tour. The tour began in New Zealand in February 1959 and they organised the South Island part. By this time

George had become a living legend.

When he actually visited the Dickeson home, I was taken to meet the Great Man. I was only eight at the time and we had recently renovated the front sitting-room in anticipation of the visit. I remember that I was disappointed — I had expected a legend and met a man with a 'funny accent'. (I also remember George was kind. He tried to offer me half a crown, but my mother refused on my behalf, unfortunately.)

George's New Zealand tour was both controversial and extremely successful — crowds were turned away at the door wherever he spoke. However, on the very last day, things began to get nasty. At 6.15 am on 16 February 1959, just hours before he was due to leave Dunedin for Sydney via Auckland, two security men forcibly entered his hotel room and threatened him.

There had been some half-hearted attempts to sabotage GA's public meetings in New

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Zealand before this, especially at the Dunedin lecture the previous night. My father had been extremely embarrassed by this last incident with New Zealand security agents, and was worried that any formal complaints to police would delay the Australian part of the tour, so the matter was not fully followed up.

Adamski was dogged by antagonistic audiences throughout the tour from then on, in a harassment program probably coordinated by US security concerns.

Several years later, my parents had a great falling out with George as his declarations became more untenable. However, the influence of that earlier association still lingered and the California Desert incident with the 'Venusian' always intrigued them.

It was not until the 1960s that UFO investigators began to realise that any aliens who called here would have as many reasons to lie and fabricate information about themselves, as do our own government authorities. In several years' time, when the

smoke and dust around Adamski have settled sufficiently, it should be possible to make a proper assessment of the contactee phenomenon — who knows, Adamski may even be 'rehabilitated'.

I suppose UFO investigators have come a very long way since the 1950s. We have certainly become a lot less trusting and naive than before, and like Rosemary, a lot more complex. However, Rosemary will always be an important link to those, simpler, gentler times. □

UFOR(NSW) — Special Interest Groups

The UFOR(NSW) Support Group is now successfully under way.

This special interest group was formed by UFOR(NSW) mid-1992 to provide support structures, counselling, and medical and therapy referral services for people with traumatic UFO abduction experiences. (The activities of this group, and abduction-type phenomena in Australia will be discussed in the first issue of UFO Reporter for 1993, due out in April 1993.)

Following the success of this group, UFOR(NSW) needs to develop further special interest groups with projects centred on subjects of particular interest to UFO investigators.

The UFOR(NSW) committee knows from surveys that its membership is a diverse group of people with a wide and developing range of expertise, interests, and enthusiasms. Unless UFOR(NSW) can provide suitable opportunities for its members to express or develop these interests, then they may well take their patronage elsewhere.

Also, there is so much happening in the UFO field that the committee alone cannot both coordinate and do all the work required. Therefore, we would like you to:

- ☐ Suggest the sorts of activities, projects or special interests you believe UFOR(NSW) should be involved with
- ☐ Indicate the extent to which you are prepared to support such activities (time, labour, skills, reporting)

For example, UFOR(NSW) needs to develop:

- ☐ A database, or series of databases with old and new UFO information (newspaper clippings, videos, photographs, articles, newsletters), in an accessible format, in a variety of forms, and under a variety of headings.
- ☐ Methods for evaluating original photographic and video material being made available to UFOR(NSW)
- ☐ Better ways for distributing UFO information to members (for example, chain parcels, supplementary publications, yearly digests of all investigations, and so on.)

Send your suggestions to: UFOR(NSW) – Special Projects, P.O. Box Q95, Queen Victoria Building, Sydney 2000

Letters to the Editors

'Alien Update'

Thank you very much indeed for sending me a copy of *UFO Reporter*, Vol.1 No.2. This is the best-produced Australian UFO magazine I have seen to date, and I will therefore list it in the forthcoming book *Alien Update*, which I have edited (a continuation of the *UFO Report* series), to be published by Arrow Books in March 1993. I will also list your organisation. Copies of the book should be widely available in Australia.

With your permission, I would like to include a few of the 1992 reports contained in your magazine. I haven't had time to go through them all yet, but certainly I would like to include an abbreviated account of the Kyeemagh disc, together with the sketch, and some reports from the East Coast flap. As you will know from my previous books, it is my policy to give full credit to investigators, writers and journals, so you need have no fears on that score.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience (*Alien Update* is currently being copy-edited).

Timothy Good

20 November 1992

East coast flap

I'm writing to suggest an alternative to the ET hypothesis which the authors of your article 'East-Coast flap 1992, Part 1' seem to think is responsible for the recent sightings along the NSW Central Coast.

It should be noted that earlier in the year an explosion, which seemed to originate from the sea, jolted the coastal belt set-

tlements of the Central Coast — it was heard and felt at The Entrance, Terrigal, and so on.

According to a 2GB radio news bulletin at the time, some damage was recorded from this 'phantomquake'. However, and interestingly enough, no *earth tremors* were recorded in any of the seismological centres at Sydney, Newcastle, or Canberra (at the time of the sonic boom).

However, an earth tremor did occur at Taree, some time later; this was recorded by seismographs and was reported in the print media.

We should remember that *nocturnal lights* were reported before and after the Newcastle quake of December 1989, and that there were many UFO sightings reported in the Newcastle and Hunter Valley area during 1988.

It is possible that geotectonic changes in the Hunter Valley and the unstable seismic fault line bordering Newcastle Harbour have produced a number of these recent UFO reports in that region. Most sightings witnessed in 1988 and again this year, were of amorphous conglomerates of light with no discernible features — presumably ET spaceships would need to be more highly structured.

There seems to be sufficient correlation between the recent Newcastle and Taree tremors and the latest anomalous aerial phenomena over that region of NSW to warrant such an alternative to the ET hypothesis.

While the geophysical hypothesis might not be the magical key for solving all UFO

reports and sightings, geologists or geophysicists might well consider the recent East-Coast Flap phenomena to be piezoelectric in origin. Hopefully, they may come up with something more plausible than the ET hypothesis.

KT (Burwood)

21 December 1992

The 'May 1992 skyquake' and a few of the questions it raises, are discussed in some detail next in this issue — Eds

Please note:

☐ If you have only recently become a member of UFOR(NSW) and have still not received your issues of *UFO Reporter*, please contact us for a copy — we may have unintentionally overlooked you.

☐ If your name or address has changed, please let us know so we can update our mailing list.

Unusual tremors shake coastal New South Wales

Bryan Dickeson and Moira McGhee

On Friday 29 May 1992, Sydney radio stations and newspapers reported a mysterious 'tremor' which shook buildings and rattled windows in northern

Mystery booms

In chapter 7, 'Unusual Natural Sounds', of *The Handbook of Unusual Natural Phenomena* (revised and expanded edition, Anchor Press 1983), William R. Corliss describes a series of possibly similar detonations heard and felt along the East Coast of North America in 1978-79 ('The East Coast Mystery Booms'). Similar booms were reported from England, California, and Canada at the same time.

Firstly, two loud detonations were reported from Charleston, South Carolina on 2 December 1978, while New Jersey reported one boom later that afternoon.

'Thirteen days later Charleston was rocked by five more booms, and explosions were heard and felt off the coast of Nova Scotia. On 20 December Charleston had two more explosions, and New Jersey, one. More followed in the different locations on 22 and 30 December and on 5, 12, and 18 January' (*New Scientist*, 77: 341, 1978). Luminous phenomena accompanied a few of the explosions.

There were literally hundreds of newspaper reports at the time. Police switchboards lit up with reports of loud booms and shaking homes from local residents.

Atmospheric scientists suggested that supersonic (SST) flights by Concorde planes were responsible, but these were discounted by a geophysicist at the Lamont-Doherty Observatory operating several pressure-recording instruments during that period — the sounds were unlike any other SST signals the station had recorded, and seemed to originate from the south.

The American 'East Coast Booms' have not been explained to everyone's satisfaction since.

Corliss's book includes numerous good examples of mysterious atmospheric booms from various parts of the world, from earlier times (several accounts come from Australia), and is well worth referring to. □

seaside suburbs, and along the Central Coast during that morning.

Dozens of residents jammed local police and radio station switchboards soon after the tremor hit at around 10.15 am. The tremor lasted for about three seconds and appeared to be strongest around Wyong, The Entrance, Terrigal and West Gosford.

Residents living in the Northern Beaches, from Collaroy to Palm Beach, and further inland at Turramurra and Wahroonga were also shaken — many thought there had been another earthquake like that which struck Newcastle in late December 1989.

Residents described the incident variously as an underground explosion, a 'roar', or a gust of wind after which the building they were in started to shake.

Some residents reported fallen masonry, cracked bricks and concrete, and pictures fallen from walls. Many locals compared the event very definitely to other earthquakes they had experienced.

Strong earthquakes had been reported from New Zealand earlier that week. However, the East Coast 'tremor' was not caused by an earthquake. It did not register at all as an earth movement on seismographs in Sydney, Newcastle or at any seismic station in the south-eastern Australia network, which is co-ordinated from Canberra.

Other causes suggested by local seismologists included:

- a supersonic boom caused by an RAAF aircraft exceeding the sound barrier. (An RAAF spokesman at Williamstown reported that no suitable jets had been flying in the Gosford-Sydney area at that time).

- ☐ a quarry explosion — however, this was seen as unlikely by seismologists, because the tremor had been reported over such a wide area.

Some Central Coast residents suggested the explosion came from severe thunderstorms out to sea. However, Bureau of Meteorology sources said that no storm activity of sufficient magnitude had been detected by radar scanners off the coast at the time.

Earlier that Friday, a Carlton resident reported to the UFOR(NSW) telephone hotline that they had heard a loud explosion. This occurred in the suburbs of southern Sydney, at 4.50 am, and caused house walls to vibrate.

The cause of both 'tremors' remains unknown. ☐

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UFO over Lyttelton Harbour, New Zealand

P Buttery

UPERS, Christchurch NZ

This account of an unusual object may be similar to trangular UFOs reported from Belgium around the same time.

Three Cass Bay youths report watching a UFO above Lyttelton Harbour early Saturday morning, 16 November 1991 for a period of about a quarter of an hour.

S had almost returned home to Harbour View Terrace at 1.24 am, after walking a friend back to their place, when he noticed an unusual series of extremely bright lights southwest of Cass Bay.

At first he thought the lights were car lights from a vehicle travelling along Governors Bay Road and rounding the bluff between Cass Bay and Rapaki — they were coming from the southwest,

in the direction of Governors Bay. S then realised the lights were too bright to be car lights, and that they were more like searchlights.

He then saw that the lights came from a very large object, moving slowly above the sea, below the level of the mountain ridges around Lyttelton Harbour.

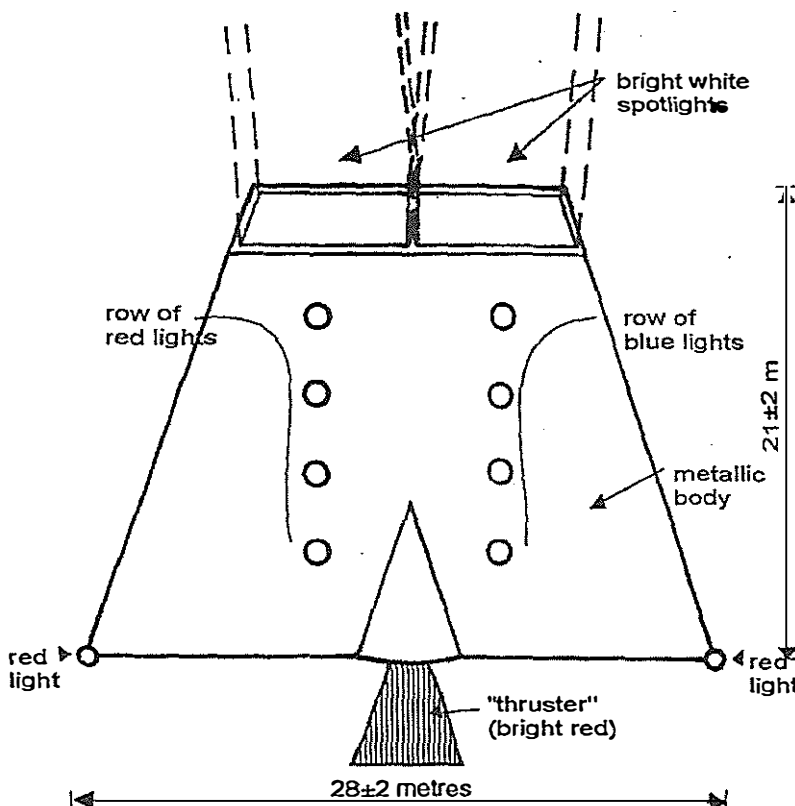
S became excited and ran inside to get two friends to come and have a look. When the three boys returned, the object was motionless above the Harbour.

After hovering for a few minutes, the object started moving slowly north-eastwards, and passed 150 metres directly over their heads (position: south $43^{\circ} 36' 24 \pm 1''$, east $172^{\circ} 41' 29 \pm 1''$) before hovering again. The metallic object was noiseless and 'like a triangle, but with a flat, blunt nose' (that is, trapezoidal) — see diagram of the object, as viewed from below:

The object had well-defined edges and was about 21 metres long and 28 metres at its widest. The boys were positive the object was too big and different to be a plane.

Two 'searchlight' beams came from squarish-sectioned panels at the front of the object, and there were two distinct rows of lights (one row red, the other blue) to the left and right of the underside. There was one smaller red light at the very tip of each 'wing'.

After hovering for a while, a bright red triangle of light appeared just behind the object — this was not a flame, but a bright, evenly-coloured triangle or cone, with well-defined edges. As the brightness of this feature increased,



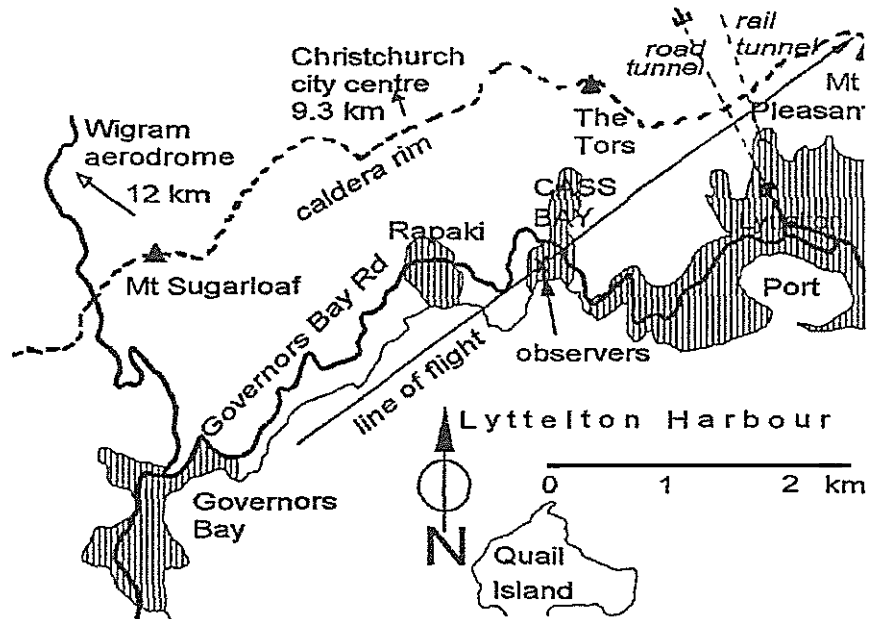
they heard a slight 'swishing' sound which increased in intensity — the boys assumed this triangular section was some kind of 'thruster' or propulsion device for the object.

The thruster became so bright, they could not look at it. The object then accelerated away, north-eastwards and upwards into the night sky and disappeared at great speed.

Other residents nearby reported they had heard the swishing sound.

A spokesman from Wigram Air Force Base some 12 km northwest of Cass Bay said the New Zealand Air Force did not have any aircraft in the air at that time.

The three boys were later interviewed on radio and appeared on local television. Each was asked to draw what they had seen separately; when compared, these illustrations were almost identical. S spoke to a meeting of UPERS



in November 1991, and appeared to be perfectly genuine. □

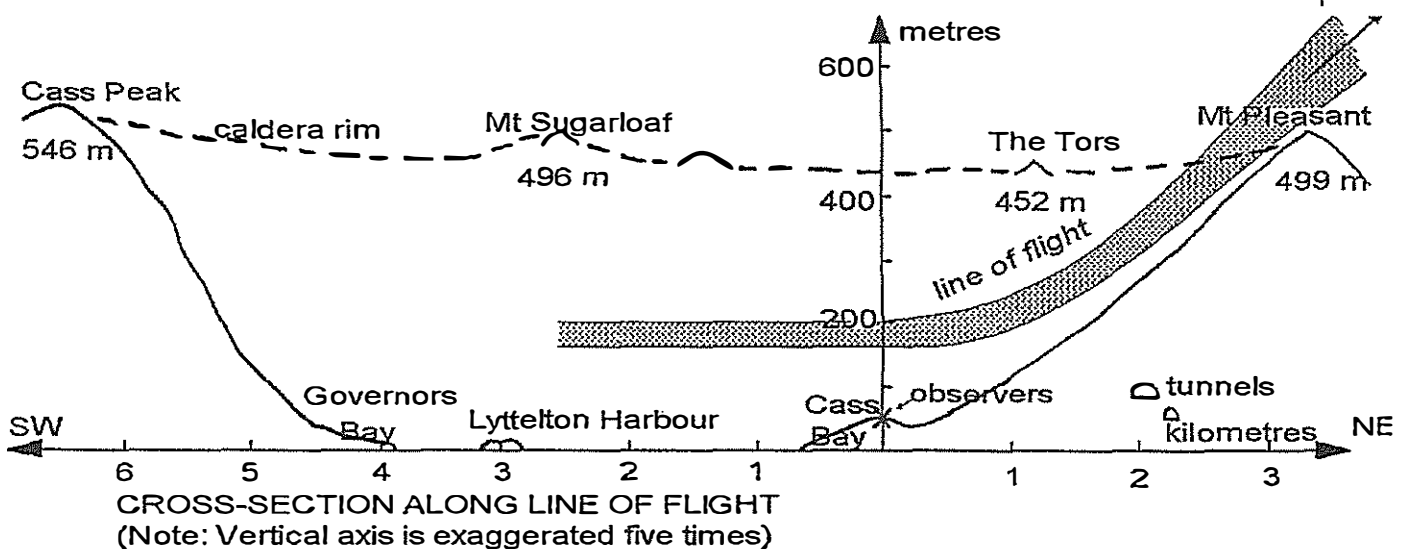
Banks Peninsula is a cluster of old, eroded volcanoes, and Lyttelton Harbour (the busy port for the city of Christchurch nearby) is a caldera — that is, the crater of an extinct volcano that has been breached and flooded by the sea.

The harbour itself is surrounded by steep mountains, 400–550 m high. Small settlements such as Cass Bay and Governors Bay are built on low-lying seaside bluffs, or the fertile alluvial fans washed out by small streams. Homes

and farmlets trail up into nearby gullies from a road system circling the crater interior.

Governors Bay Road forms part of the crater road system west of Lyttelton, and winds some 20–60 metres above sea level through Cass Bay and Rapaki to Governors Bay and beyond.

The object seems to have been moving horizontally at an altitude of 150–200 m, within and below the rim of the old crater. At around Cass Bay, it 'changed gear' and accelerated upwards to clear the crater wall. □



A close observation in Waverley Park

Paul Sowiak-Rudej

The observer is a nine-year old boy from Dover Heights, personally known to Paul and considered to be a reliable witness.

On Sunday 24 May 1992 at around noon, J was playing within the Waverley Park Children's playground, off Bondi Road, Waverley (Sydney). This playground is located slightly south-west of the grandstand on the west side of Waverley Park Oval.

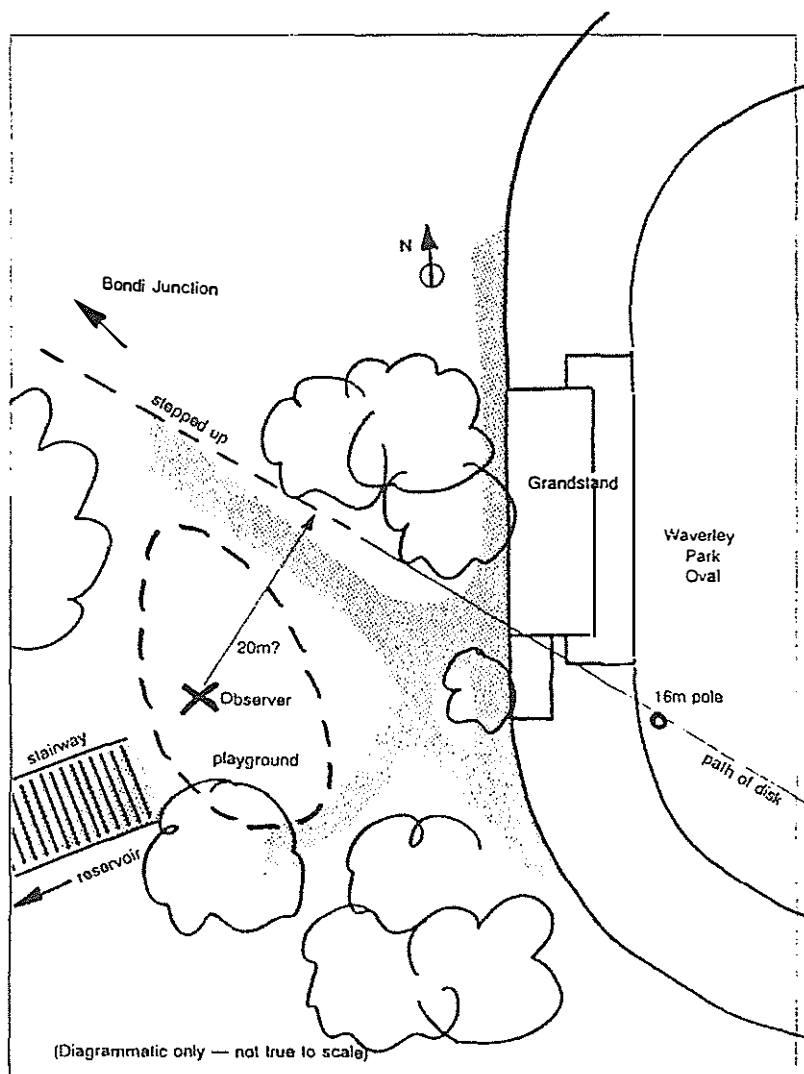
The weather was clear and sunny, with slight breezes and J was standing near the centre of the playground (posi-

tion south $33^{\circ} 53' 55 \pm 1.2''$, east $151^{\circ} 15' 11 \pm 1.2''$).

The playground is located on a levelled area, about 6 m higher than the Oval itself, between the grandstand and a steep hill further westwards on which a reservoir is built (J was not aware that the structure on the hill behind was part of a reservoir). Although the area around the playground contains numerous mature trees (a mixture of natives and exotics, 8–12 m high), there is a good view down towards the Pacific Ocean over the southern part of the Oval to the east and south-east (to the seaside suburbs of Tamarama, Bronte, and Clovelly).

J was looking south-eastwards towards Clovelly, when he noticed a grey disc-like object in the sky nearby. It was travelling horizontally just above tree-top level from the south-east to the northwest. The disc passed about 6m above a 16 m pole supporting floodlights for the Oval, situated some 60m due east of J's position, and moved over the grandstand.

The object had a clear, slightly red-dish cylindrical 'cap' on top, which came to a point. J could see sunlight reflecting off the clear cap. At the back was an antenna-like structure, and underneath the disc there appeared to be 'curlythings', which could have been an undercarriage of some sort, or an effect due to atmospheric swirling — J could not elaborate. The object may have been making a low noise, J was unsure. The disc section was about the size of a car — J stepped out a comparable distance which was directly measured at 4 m.



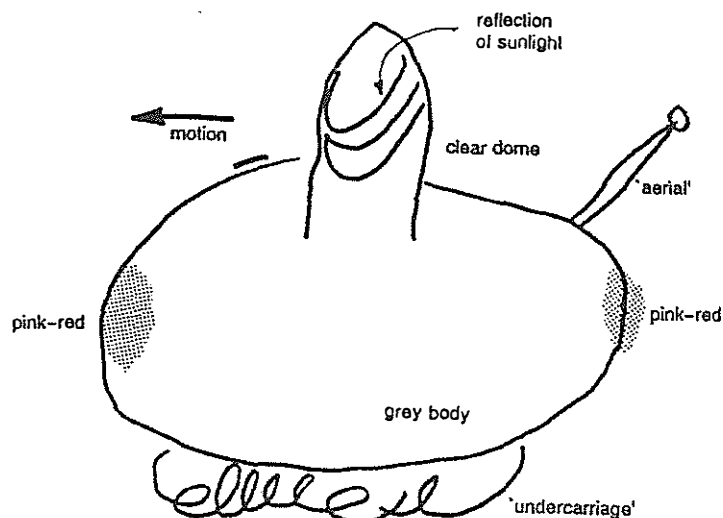
Just past the grandstand, the object increased its altitude by making a series of regular 5 m 'steps', vertically and horizontally, until it was about 80m up in the air. It was still travelling north-west overall.

The disc carried on past where J was standing, just north of the playground, to a point north-west of Waverley Park which would very nearly coincide with the intersection of the Bondi Bypass, and Old South Head Road (two very busy roads). The disc then hesitated and changed direction to move due east, out to sea.

J last saw the object disappearing seawards. He estimated that the object had only been in his view for about 10 seconds.

South-west of the playground is a concrete stairway up a steeply-sloped mound some 10 m high. The western side of this mound contains at least one large underground reservoir. The top of the mound is flattened with a squat, 5m high, cylindrical reservoir building. This round 'tower' is positioned in the very centre of Waverley Park and has a tall radio mast on its northeastern side — the main structure looks a bit like a concrete wedding cake, with arches and windows around the sides (the grand stairway and reservoir tower are built in the elaborate style often preferred by civil engineers of the 1920s and 30s).

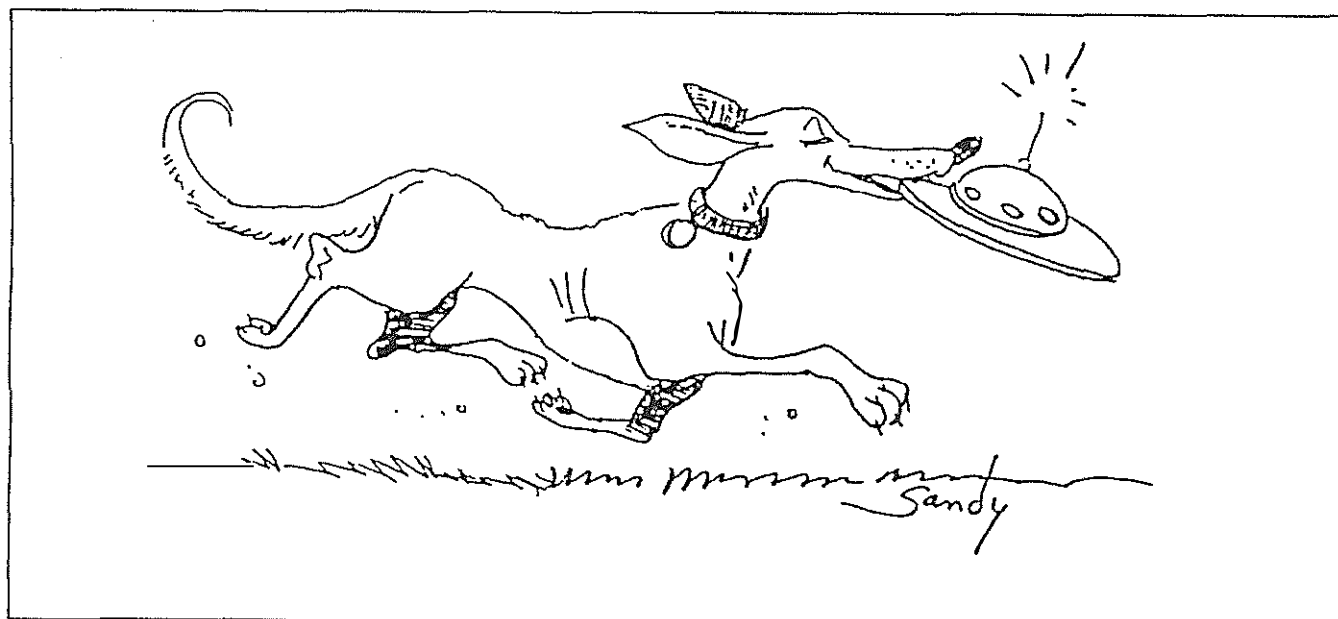
The grassy hill is surrounded by trees, and its pink and ochre tower make



The Waverley Park object

it a distinctive feature of the western skyline from the beachside suburbs — there are a few multi-story apartment blocks to the west of this hill before you get to the tall buildings concentrated around Bondi Junction.

When first seen by J, the object would have been travelling horizontally, at an altitude only a few metres above the level of the top of the mound, and on a trajectory just north of the hill and tower. □



Close-up view of bullet-shaped UFO at Glenfield

Moira McGhee and Bryan Dickeson

This incident was notified to the UFOR hotline within hours of it occurring—we were able to interview the witnesses within a week. Some aspects of the case are still being investigated, so parts of this account are incomplete.

On Monday 6 July 1992 at 2110 hrs, M and her fiancé C were driving northeast through Glenfield heading towards home. M was driving.

While approaching their turnoff south-eastwards from Railway Parade into Salisbury Avenue, they noticed a cluster of extremely bright lights some distance behind the line of trees to the east of Railway Parade. (These trees form an irregular windbreak along the western perimeter of the Seddon Park playing field.)

At first M and C thought the lights were the night-lights for the sports field itself — Seddon Park has several tall metal towers with arrays of powerful, white quartz-halogen lamps for night practice. However, on this Monday night, the lights seemed to be out of position; they were down too low be-

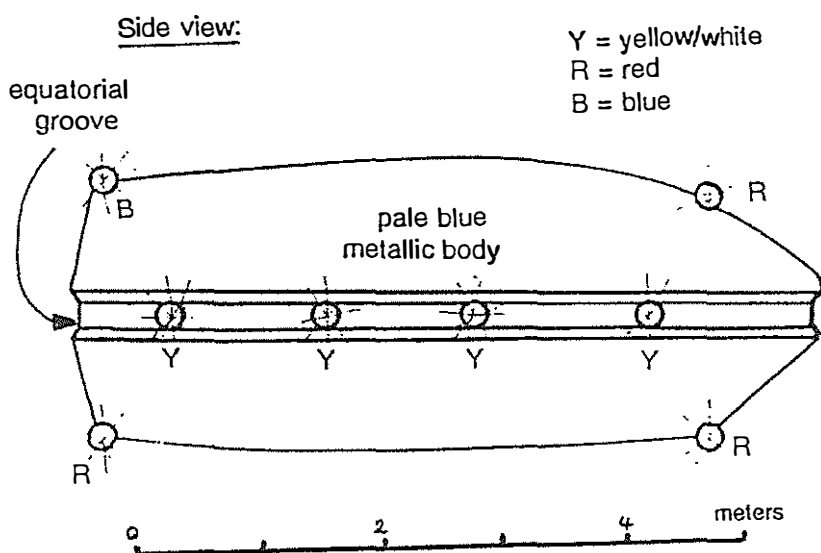
hind the trees and too far east. They were also more yellowish, and there were blue, orangy-red, and red flashing lights visible through gaps in the trees.

Approaching the north-western corner of the playing field, where the windbreak trees thin out almost completely, they could see very clearly through the windscreen that the lights were coming from a single object hovering beyond the park. There was very little traffic travelling along Railway Parade and M and (mostly) C could make out the definite shape of an elliptical object sharper at one end ('the front') and flatter at 'the back'. It had an equatorial groove, and lights of various colours at different points of the main body. C is a commercial draftsman and provided the diagram shown in Figure 1.

As usual, M slowed the car down to turn right into Salisbury Street (still travelling in the direction of home). They could now see the object 'back' end-on (position $33^{\circ} 58' 58 \pm 1''$ S, $150^{\circ} 53' 27 \pm 1''$ E). It was hovering motionless about 6 m above ground level. There were no lights on in the houses nearby — no-one seemed to be at home.

End-on, the object had a hard-edged, pale blue metallic body with a rounded top, a flat bottom and sloping lower sides,

In the centre of the back of the object there were two large, lit triangular orange-yellow shapes — these had a cross-hatch pattern to them 'like the grid-patterned grill you see on some cars'. There were two flashing red lights



on the bottom of the object, and one blue light on top (see Figure 2).

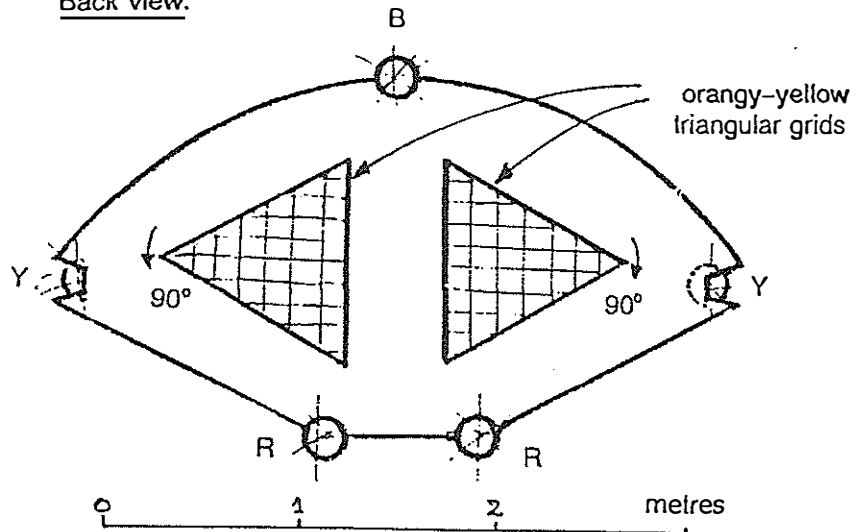
M turned the car lights off, slowing the vehicle right down and moving to the left hand side of the road. She stopped the car next to a clump of shrubs, while C leapt out of the passenger's seat and ran towards the noiseless object. M stayed in the car, which she kept idling. C got to within 15 m of the object when all the lights on it suddenly switched off. The two orange-yellow triangular shapes then rotated in opposite directions through 90 degrees (over about 3 seconds) and the object started to slowly accelerate south-eastwards, away from the observers.

M called to C to bring the car up; he scrambled in and they started to chase the object down Salisbury Avenue. A little further down the road, the object passed directly over the head of a middle-aged asian woman who was in her front garden. The woman merely looked up at the object and over at the car following behind with its lights turned off, before moving inside.

They turned right from Salisbury Street into Tudor Place which is a dead end, and had to backtrack. Further on, Salisbury Avenue becomes a dead end, so they backtracked up Salisbury Avenue to Newtown Street, turned left (to travel south), and then east along Fawcett Street, keeping the object in view as best as possible. They turned up Bougainville Road and drove to where that road crosses Belmont Street. Here they stopped the car and got out to watch the now stationary object 2-3 km directly north of them and only a few degrees above the horizon (position probably $33^{\circ} 57' 17 \pm 16''$ S, $150^{\circ} 53' 48 \pm 1''$ E).

They watched it in this position for about another 10 minutes (the local area is a reasonably flat plain for some kilometres around). Although too far away to see as much detail as before, the blue and red flashing lights had been switched on again, and the object seemed to be hovering much as when they had first noticed it. During this time, a second, identical object came up

Back view:



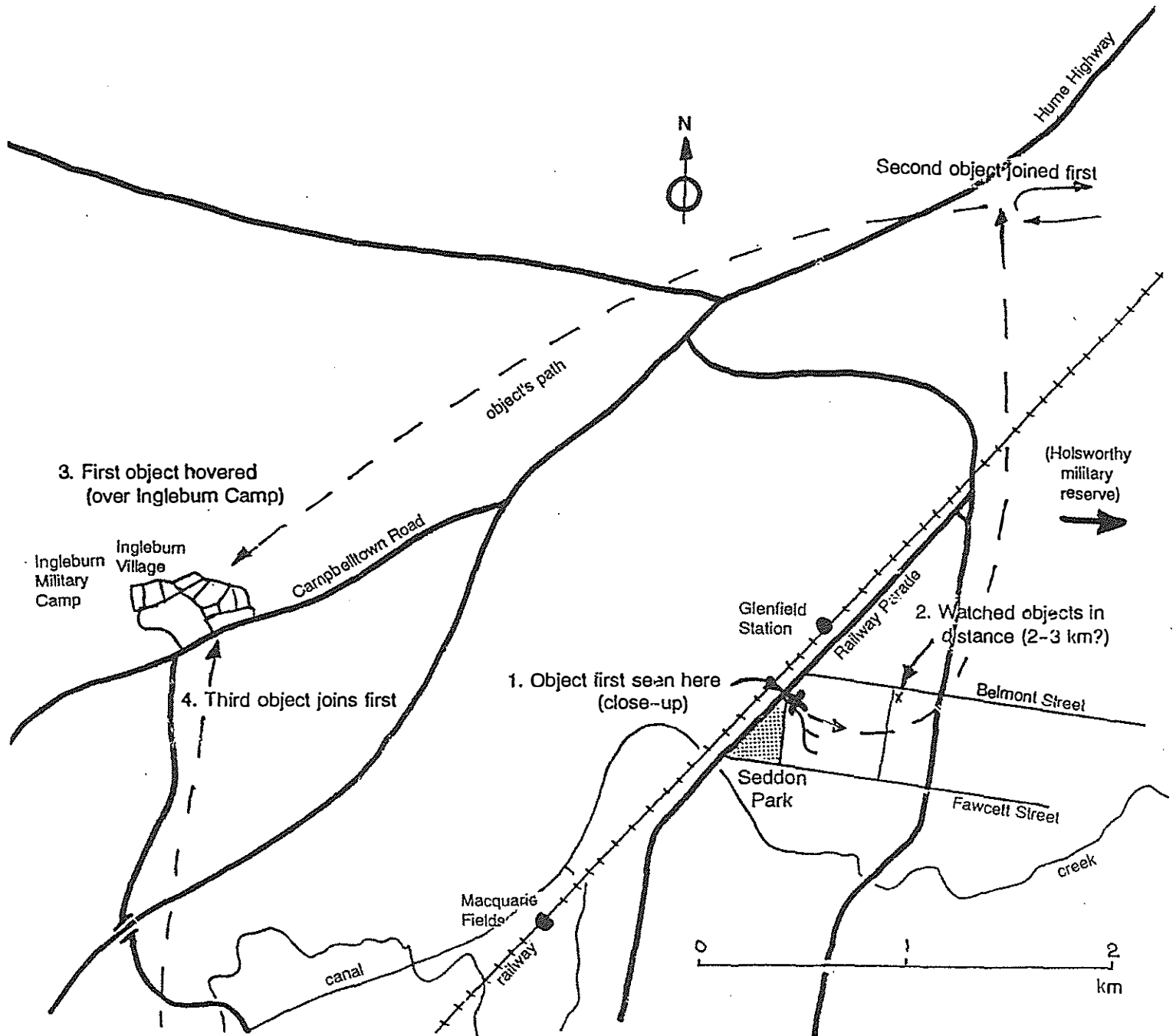
slowly from the east to join the first (it had the same set of coloured flashing lights) — both hovered alongside one another for a few minutes, and then the second object moved eastwards, back from where it had come.

The first object then moved south-westwards through an arc of about 90 degrees over the next 2-3 minutes. It took up a hovering position about 3-4 km directly west of the observers, over the Ingleburn Village (part of Ingleburn Military Camp — position $33^{\circ} 58' 35 \pm 1''$ S, $150^{\circ} \text{ deg } 51' 19 \pm 20''$ E). After a few minutes it was joined by a third identical object which seemed to come from the south-west.

C and M watched these two objects hovering together for another 4-5 minutes, before getting bored — M wanted to get home. They got back into the car and drove back along Fawcett and home. M has trouble parking their large model car, so she got out and gave him the wheel. M then looked at her watch — it was 2140 hrs).

C went inside to phone a friend who lived nearby to see if they could see any objects in their general area, but no luck. C went back outside (at 2145 hrs) to look at the sky and noticed one of the objects (with coloured lights and orange grills), over in the western sky moving northwards along the aeroplane flight path, but only about 150 m up. It was much lower than a normal plane and moved

Bullet-shaped UFO at Glenfield



out of view behind the house next door. He was not sure if this was one of the three objects seen before, or a fourth object.

A few minutes later he saw a plane following the same flight path — it was smaller, blinking, and higher. No more objects were seen after this. □

East coast flap of 1992 — Part II

P.Sowiak-Rudej, F.Sinclair, C.Vickery, M.McGhee.

The second and final part of this article describes two of the more complex and intriguing events investigated in New South Wales.

Wednesday 13 May 1992, Soldiers Beach (immediately southwest of Norah Head — Paul Sowiak-Rudej spoke to witnesses two days later)

A Toukley couple took a friend for a 'test-drive' out to Soldiers Beach in their recently-purchased Volkswagon combivan. At around 1900 hrs that evening, they parked their vehicle on the lower carpark (seaward side), north of the Soldiers Beach Surf Club (33° 17' 22" ±1" S, 151° 33' 5 0" ±1" E) and facing southwestwards across the water towards The Entrance. The lower carpark is away from any built-up area, and city lights, and there were several other vehicles parked there. (One car, a pale blue Commodore parked nearby, contained four other people — one man, three women — who also watched the entire spectacle, but 'didn't want to get involved'.)

The witnesses started watching a string of unusually bright clusters of red, green, and white twinkling lights. Three of the objects formed a line about 20 degrees above the southern horizon, out to sea from The Entrance, and another seven seemed to be hovering above the shoreline between The Entrance and Soldiers Beach.

From their vantage point, some of the objects seemed to be rotating slowly, others were moving slowly back and forth (making sorties inland and then back to the coast), or making quick jumps up and down. There seemed to be no particular pattern to this activity. Some seemed to be moving northwards and inland, towards the Munmorah Power Station, and back again.

From time to time while they watched, the line was joined by more of the same light clusters travelling up the coast from the south or southwest — there were at least ten objects.

The night was cool and clear and there was a moon overhead. The witnesses could see sporadic lightning flashes from an electrical storm some way out to sea, southeast of their position.

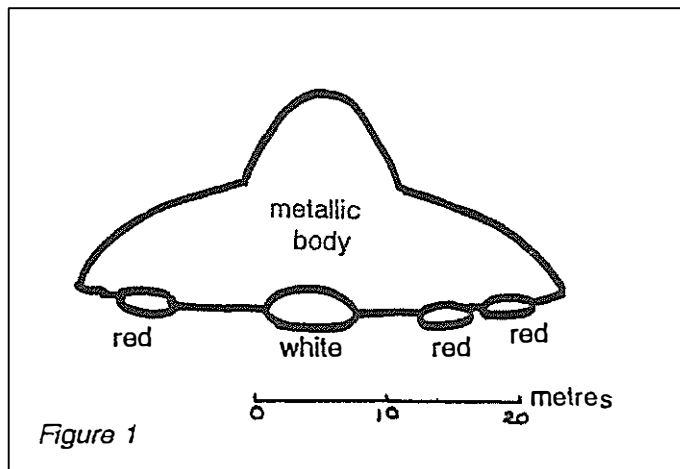
Two of the witnesses had got out of the van for a better look. (the third witness would not leave the van). One witness with Army reserve experience, walked down to the beach nearby to talk to two men fishing from the rocks at the northern end of Soldiers Beach. He asked if they could see the objects. The two fisherman said they had been watching the spectacle for some time, and several other objects as well.

Then the nearest object southwestwards along the coast from their position started moving northwards ('much slower than an aeroplane'), directly towards Soldiers Point. As it moved, the object periodically stopped and started, hovering and moving off again, almost in a deliberate manner, as if 'having a good look around'.

At first, not much detail could be seen, but when the object came closer, the observers could see that it was made up of a main body with three or four smaller red and white lights underneath.

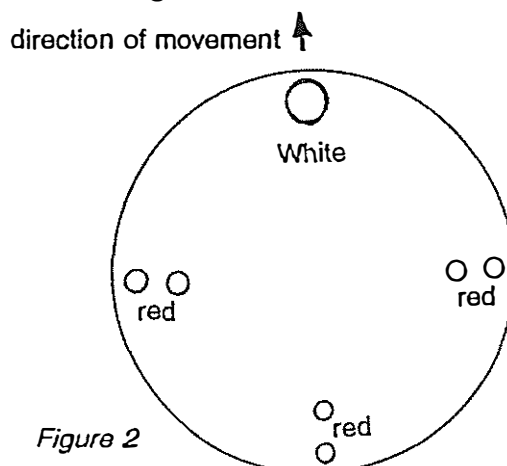
When the object passed about 500 metres directly overhead, the witnesses could clearly see that the object was reflective, probably metallic, and almost disc-shaped with a flattish under-

side, and that there was a dome on top — see Figure 1.



(From angular measurements taken by the interviewer, the object was later calculated to have been about 36 ± 7 metres across).

The witness standing near the van (away from the sea) noted that the object made a slight 'whooshing' noise and had lights underneath, arranged as in Figure 2.



When the object got to Soldiers Point, it started to veer inland slightly (changing smoothly from a north-easterly to a northwest direction).

Meanwhile, two more objects from above the shoreline had also started moving northwards towards the witnesses. When these objects reached the Soldiers Beach area they began to put on 'a bit of a dogfight' by making small, fast jumps 'up and down' in the sky above the rocks about where the Fisher-

men were standing. All witnesses could clearly see a hard-edge outline to the objects, which were the same shape as the first object, except these craft had red and green lights underneath. The two fishermen had flashlights with them and flashed them at the dogfighting objects. The two objects then shot straight upwards and faded from sight.

The witnesses quickly returned to their van, got in and followed the first object which had headed inland. They travelled through Norah Head, Norahville, Budgewoi, and towards Buff Point, keeping the slow-moving object in view, and even paced it at about 40 km per hour. Over Munmorah Power Station (some 6 km northwest of Soldiers Point — $33^{\circ} 13' 38'' \pm 2''$ S, $151^{\circ} 32' 23'' \pm 2''$ E), the object suddenly sped up, slightly increasing its upward angle, and soon faded from view, some 20-30 degrees up in the northwestern sky. The three witnesses then returned to the Soldiers Beach area, after having been away for about 20-25 minutes.

Two more objects from the southern shoreline (identical to the first three) reached the Soldiers Point area before turning inland quite sharply, and heading west.

Soon after, a large oval red light was seen to approach Soldiers Point from the south eastern sky, from the area of the out to sea where there was an electrical storm. It was travelling faster than a plane; while still a little out to sea from the witnesses it suddenly changed direction and shot straight upwards out of sight (no particular details were noted).

The next object that came northwards was quite different from the others, and much larger. It had brighter lights and seemed to have a shinier surface.

At around 2030 hrs it hovered above the rocks at Soldiers Point for about 15 minutes. It had an unusual disc-like shape underneath (as with the previous objects), but this was about twice the diameter of the previous objects, and there were six red, green, and white

lights positioned within the circumference. The overall outline of the craft above this ring of lights was similar to that of a conventional aeroplane — a very large one, bigger than a 'jumbo jet' (over 130 metres long? Later calculations from angular measurements suggested the object was 165 ± 15 metres long).

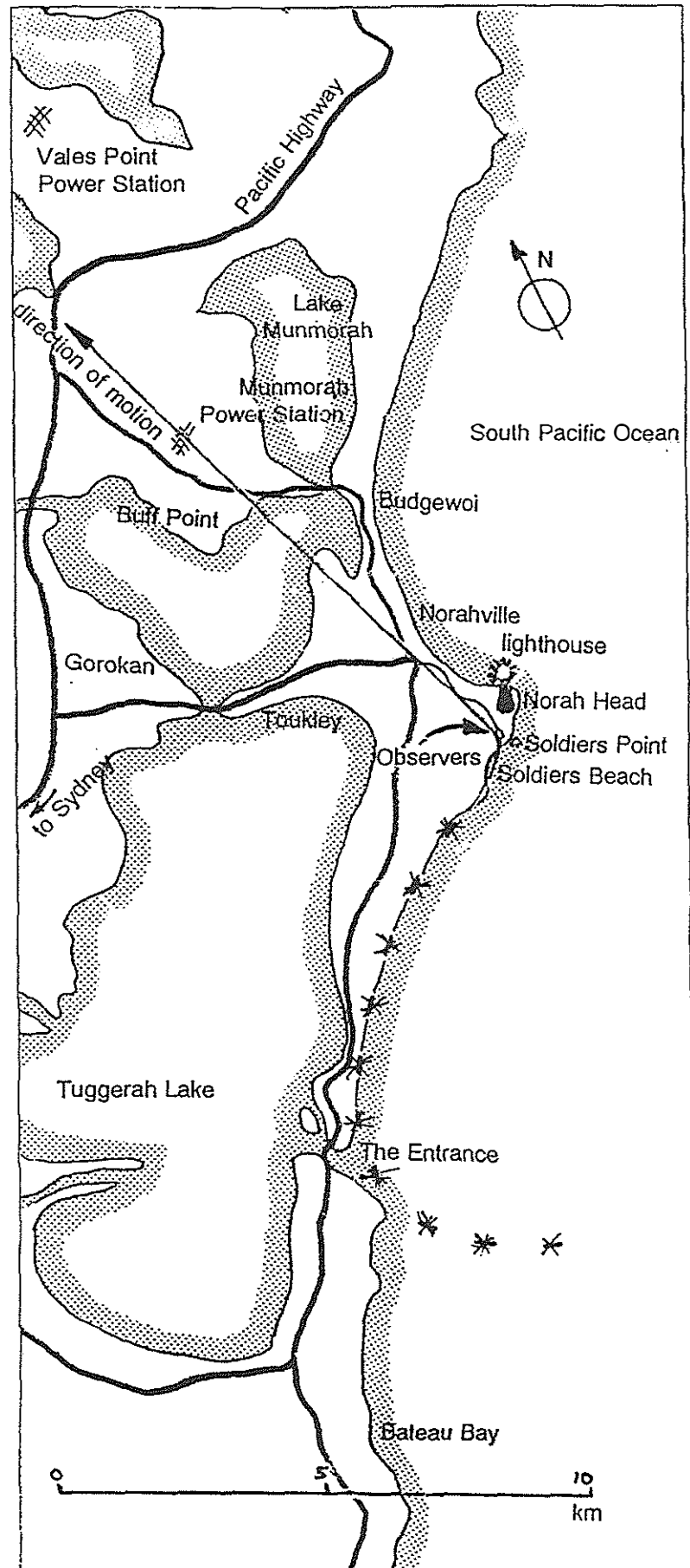
The 'jumbo' was seen to slowly rotate horizontally (clockwise, as viewed from below). There were other small lights — blue, green, red, orange and white moving around the 'aeroplane' edges and wings, and in the air nearby — these were much smaller and dimmer. When the 'jumbo' started to move away, these subsidiary lights around the wings all switched off simultaneously, so that it looked like a large disc again.

The 'jumbo' seemed to have the right sort of bumps and shapes where there should be jet engines, but there were no flames or exhaust visible and there was no obvious noise while it hovered above the beach. It certainly wasn't a helicopter.

The two fishermen flashed a torch at this object three times. It promptly flashed two extremely bright white searchlight beams from its 'nose section' three times in reply, back onto the fishermen below, and then veered off northwestwards.

Two of the witnesses ran across the beach towards the fishermen, waving their arms excitedly at the 'jumbo'. As it passed overhead, the 'jumbo' also brightly spotlighted them and the surrounding section of beach for several seconds. It moved off northwestwards, following the same path as the first object (towards Munmorah Power Station). The 'jumbo' accelerated greatly as it went and quickly disappeared into the distance.

The next object from the line (the seventh they saw pass directly overhead), was identical to the smaller objects before it and followed the same flight path (veering northwest) as the first object.



There seemed to be more objects still in the southern sky, but no more passed directly over Soldiers Point.

After this sighting the witnesses went to Toukley Police Station to report the incident. At first the duty officers laughed, before deciding to take a few cars out to check the situation — there were soon about five police cars backed up in the Soldiers Point car park. The police could still see some lights out to sea, southwards, and a couple towards The Entrance, so they started asking questions. (There were people nearby who had also seen the 'jumbo' earlier that evening).

The police acknowledged that there was still something out to sea and they wished they'd seen the earlier incidents.

By this time it was about 9 o'clock, the display had taken about 2 hours. Soon after, the remaining few objects over by The Entrance just seemed to gradually disappear — after dimming and brightening they dimmed to a blue, or blue-greenish, or red point of light. (These seemed to be stationary, but slowly rotating).

Several other accounts from people around The Entrance, and the two fishermen of these events, confirm the incidents described here.

Monday 25 May 1992, Hamilton South (Newcastle)

Four members of the same family watched eight or nine large orangy-red stars pass directly overhead in formation, from their back yard ($32^{\circ} 56' 00'' \pm 1''$ S, $151^{\circ} 45' 23'' \pm 1''$ E). The objects moved from west to east over about 15 minutes, between 1200 and 1230 hrs. A single light was followed by three pairs of lights, and then a final, trailing light.

While watching this display, a civilian airplane with smaller flashing navigation lights passed below the formation, midway between the second and third pairs, heading north-westwards (Figure 3).

The front light moved smoothly, but the trailing light moved erratically

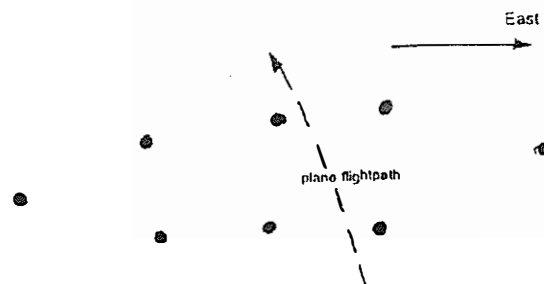


Figure 3

(occasionally slowing down or speeding up). The objects were thought to be about 2 km away.

One of the family rushed inside to get a set of binoculars for a better look. When viewed through binoculars each of the eight red lights appeared as an orange bell-shaped object with a red light on top (Figure 4).

(An estimate of the possible size of the objects, from angular and magnification details, indicates they may have been 10 ± 3 metres across)

A ninth object could be seen trailing the first eight red lights — but only through binoculars. This ninth light was not nearly as bright, had an orange colour and was hexagonal in shape.

The family watched the formation for 10-15 minutes, before the objects faded out within the light cloud in the eastern sky. When the objects had faded from sight, one of the witnesses went inside to telephone Williamtown RAAF Base. The Duty officer told them that Williamtown did not have its radar on, so could not verify any objects: however, they had already received a number of other phonecalls about the lights that evening. □

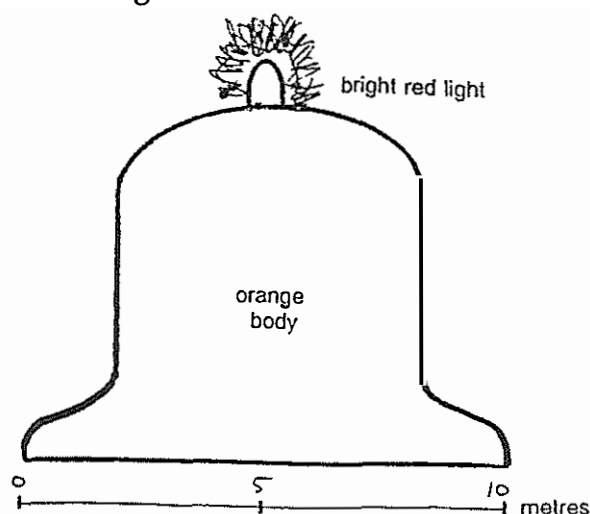


Figure 4

UFOs and the Media

B.Dickeson, P.Khoury, F.Sinclair, P.Sowiak-Rudej

One of the more interesting aspects of the 1992 East Coast Flap was the confusing role played by local print media.

In April and May 1992, the first UFO accounts were reported as something of a novelty.

Once the reports became more frequent and the observers more earnest, local newspapers began treating the incidents humorously and started inferring that the witnesses were misguided. At times local journalists stumbled over each other to see who could produce the silliest material.

Further afield, the larger metropolitan papers seemed determined to ignore UFO reports altogether. The only report to make it into the big Sydney dailies happened very early in the piece, and was rather paternalistic:

Mystery Light in UFO Terror

Police were flooded with calls from worried and hysterical people who reported seeing an unidentified flying object early today.

Eight callers said they saw a large round white object with a bright flashing red and white light on each side flying off Norah Head near Toukley about 2.30 a.m. Witnesses said the UFO darted silently around on the horizon before speeding to the coast, across Budgewoi Lake and towards Newcastle.

Senior Constable Wayne Shaw of Toukley police said their switchboard lit up like a Christmas tree with people calling about the UFO. "We received several calls in quick succession from people who claim to have seen a white light off Norah Head", Constable Shaw said.

"They were frantic. I can't say what it was. I don't know. By the time we arrived at the scene we could find nothing."

A man told police he was walking his dog along the beach when he spotted the UFO. "His dog panicked, broke its lead and bolted," Constable Shaw said. "Another woman said the light lit up her bedroom.

The woman said that the light was so bright she thought it was coming into her room." Despite the number of sightings, police said sceptics in the area said it may have been a helicopter or plane. Witnesses said the object took off at high speed towards Newcastle. A Civil Aviation Authority spokesman said there were no reports of anything in the area.

"Nothing appeared on radars at Sydney Airport around the time of the alleged sightings," the spokesman said.

A RAN spokeswoman said some ships had been involved in operations during the past week and Fleet Command intelligence reports suggested nothing unusual early today. "There have been operations but they have been far out to sea," the spokeswoman said.

RAAF bases at Williamstown and Richmond also reported having no activity on their radars and had not received any claims of sightings.....'

(*Telegraph Mirror*, 28 April 1992)

Mind you, the *Telegraph* has a long tradition of such condescension. This report promotes its 'traditional' view that people who live outside Sydney are not only quaint, but hysterically so. *UFO Reporter* readers will be comforted to know that on the Central Coast, the locals were much less hysterical than the staff of the *Telegraph*.

When you take into account the raw wire reports from which the basic story evolved, it's doubtful that the picture newspaper readers were given was very accurate the essential details were treated rather casually; for example:

A UFO sighting [occurred] around Soldiers Point and across Budgewoi Lake last night with more than a dozen calls to Toukley and Wyong police stations. The object travelled at very high speed, turning night into day.

Police say some callers were quite shaken by the experience and appeared genuine. One woman at Green Point said she was woken by the intensity of the light shimmering across the Lake.

Police at Toukley have contacted Civil Aviation Departments and RAAF officials, but have been unable to come up with an explanation.

(AAP wire, Tuesday 28 April: 0607 hrs)

A UFO sighting at the northern end of the Central Coast this morning, with as many as a dozen callers to Toukley and Wyong police stations. All referred to a round object moving at thousands of kilometres an hour, around Soldiers Point and Budgewoi Lake.

Senior Constable Wayne Shaw at Toukley police says the calls started coming in from the same area at Norah Head.

(AAP wire, Tuesday 28 April: 0634 hrs)

Naval Fleet Command has confirmed war games are being conducted off the Central Coast, but the Navy says it was not using flares near Norah Head.

The Civil Aviation Authority says its radar at Sydney Airport didn't report anything unusual off the Central Coast at the time of the sightings.

(AAP wire, Tuesday 28 April: 0809 hrs)

Police Can't Confirm UFO Sightings

Police in Toukley on the New South Wales Central Coast have been unable to determine what this morning's unidentified flying object was or if it even exists.

Inspector Mike Stephens of the Toukley patrol says police had three reports between 2.20 a.m. and 2.35 a.m. of a round, red and white flashing light hovering over Norah Head Beach.

But he says police hadn't been able to find the people who made the reports to authenticate the claims.

Inspector Stephens says he's a little sceptical about the reports. He says two of the names and addresses of people who apparently saw the object did not check out and the third supposed witness did not provide a name and address.

The nearby Williamtown Air Force Base has told police [there were] no aircraft flying at the time.

(AAP wire, Tuesday 28 April: 1015 hrs)

Toukley police are having some difficulty investigating reports of UFO sightings this morning.

Despite the problems with finding some of the witnesses, police are still sure there was some unexplained activity around Norah Head just after 2.

Andrew Plumley reports: Toukley police received the first 'phone call at 2.30 from someone who'd seen a round flying object with bright white and red flashing lights, moving at very high speed around Soldiers Point. Subsequent callers made similar observations of the hovering craft, from Norah Head to Green Point.

Another caller has now contacted police from a southern Newcastle suburb saying she saw the lights too.

But this morning, some of the 'phone numbers from witnesses aren't connected, others aren't answering, and some of the few witnesses police can contact say they don't want to take the matter further, and don't want any media or police attention.

Navy and Air Force officials have denied any knowledge of

(AAP wire, Tuesday 28 April: 1110 hrs)

Just because someone does not answer the phone, or doesn't want to publicise their experience, doesn't mean they don't exist. Who knows, as it was a Tuesday, these people might have been at work?

Another report of a UFO sighting on the Coast last night; this one at Pearl Beach well to the south of the Norah Head sighting which has created national interest.

Toukley police are still unable to come up with a plausible explanation for the sightings which resulted in as many as a dozen reports to police at Toukley and Wyong.

Elizabeth at Pearl Beach says she remarked to her husband last night that she thought she'd seen a UFO.

(AAP wire, Tuesday 28 April: 1309 hrs)

As well as a tendency to treat details or facts as highly fluid, the strong desire of some reporters to 'humanise' the phenomenon may have misled many readers:

UFOs and starry, starry nights

It doesn't take too long for the reports to come flooding in, once one person makes a claim on a UFO sighting.

This week's reports from around The Entrance and Norah Head have encouraged an East Gosford man to 'come out of the closet', so to speak.

This man, who prefers to remain nameless, was in his Webb Street backyard last Thursday around 4 a.m., answering a call of nature.

Relaxing and looking above at the starry sky, the man claims he saw an 'illuminated' shape moving from south to north. It was shaped like a wedge and silent.

No lights flashed as the object, moving at roughly the speed of an aircraft, passed out of sight. The RAAF knew nothing about it, neither was Civil Aviation aware of it.

There have been no more sightings reported from the location, but, early each morning, a man can be seen in a Webb Street backyard with a camera.

(*Tuggerah Lakes News*, Wednesday 29 April 1992).

This sort of patronising treatment would send the bravest of souls rushing back into their closet, camera and all!

One newspaper bravely attempted to stop the silliness once and for all:

Central Coast police dismiss UFO 'sightings'

Unidentified Flying Objects and excitable journalists were a double headache for Toukley's patrol commander Inspector Mike Stephens, yesterday.

Inspector Stephens said that from about 2.20 a.m. yesterday the Central Coast station had received a series of about six phone calls at five-minute intervals reporting sightings of unidentified flying objects.

The reports attracted wide publicity on morning radio news bulletins, with speculation that naval exercises off the Central Coast were to blame.

But Inspector Stephens said police had investigated the original reports and had not seen anything. Subsequent media appeals

for any other sightings had not met with success.

Police found that addresses did not match names or telephone numbers in three recorded messages at the police station. Inspector Stephens said one complainant, a Mr Smith, made his 'sighting' while walking his dog in the rain along a beach at 2.15 a.m.

After attending to the mystery of the unidentified flying objects, Inspector Stephens was kept busy attending to something much more tangible: a long line of eager journalists.

(*Newcastle Herald* Wednesday 29 April 1992).

While the *Central Coast Express* produced some of the best cartoons on the UFO flap, it also took a lightweight and cliché-ridden approach:

'Up in the air' over UFO

An elusive Mr Smith walking his dog along a lonely beach in a thunderstorm at 2.30 a.m. on Tuesday led the Sydney media a merry chase after he reported UFO sightings to Toukley police.

The man reported seeing a brilliant object with white and red lights which hovered and then shot into the sky towards Norah Head.

Toukley and Wyong police took more than 15 calls from Toukley, Budgewoi, Norah Head and Rocky Point by 3 a.m. But by 9 a.m. yesterday Toukley Inspector Mike Stephens was 'very sceptical' about the calls.

'We're sort of up in the air at the moment,' he said after police checked the names and addresses of three of the callers and found that they were not authentic. [These reviewers doubt whether the *Express* bothered to check much of this information itself.]

'The man with the dog gave his name as Mr Smith but didn't leave a phone number or address,' Inspector Stephens said. 'You could say we are very sceptical about it.' Wyong Constable David Matthews said the station took a call from a Rocky Point man who said he was watching television when

he saw a huge light travelling in the sky towards Toukley.

The station had not sent a car to check the address given. But others who were awake between 2 and 3 a.m. said they saw a lot of lightning but no unusual lights and certainly no little green men.

A Central Coast Taxis driver in Toukley at 3 a.m. said there was a 'hairy feeling about the place' because of the storm but he saw nothing.

Toukley Cake Shop manager Robert Jones said he saw 'a bright light' but he put it down to lightning. 'It was over the water but I didn't really take any notice,' he said.

'The milkman didn't see anything either.'

(*Central Coast Express*, Wednesday 29 April 1992)

Presumably, cake shop managers and milkmen know everything and everyone in their community. By this time many local reporters seem to have decided that the 'facts' it had left unpursued could be taken as read, and that the matter should be put to rest, as indicated by the following article:

UFO Reports a mystery to police

A mass sighting of a UFO early on Tuesday morning may have been a hoax.

Toukley police received a host of calls shortly after 2 am reporting a brilliant white object hovering around the Norah Head area.

However, on investigation they found that the names of the callers did not match the names of the addresses they had been given.

When police called at the Norah Head homes given by the mystery callers, the residents were bemused by the UFO queries and said they had not seen anything.

One caller claimed he had been walking his dog on the beach at 2.15 am when the dog saw the object, became frantic, and broke his leash.

Another caller said the object in the sky had flashing lights.

Three of the callers gave their names as Mr Davis, Mrs Walters and Mr Smith.

'The whole thing doesn't gel; the names don't match those of people living at the

addresses given,' the police spokesman said.

(*The Wyong Shire Advocate*, Thursday 30 April 1993)

However, at the same time, one intrepid *Sun Weekly* reporter, apparently against all the odds, had been able to locate some witnesses:

UFO sightings

Reported sightings of a UFO off Norah Head made the phones ring hot at Toukley police station in the early hours of Tuesday (28 April) morning.

Constable Shane Morgan said he and two other officers received six calls in quick succession, at about 2.30 am.

He said each caller gave the same report of seeing bright red and white flashing lights flashing from a round object moving very quickly and silently, north towards Newcastle.

Constable Morgan described as 'frantic' one woman who said the lights were coming in through her window.

Another caller reportedly told police he was out walking with his dog when he sighted the UFO. He said the dog went berserk and broke its lead.

Constable Morgan said he had "no doubts about the genuine nature of the calls".

Tuesday's reported sightings prompted a Umina woman to give more credence to something her children alleged they'd seen from their bedroom window last Wednesday night.

Mrs Annette Purcival said her eight-year-old daughter, Kirsty awoke during the night to see something which she described as "round, with red and yellowish-white flashing lights, way up in the sky".

"She was quite churned up about the whole thing. She said it didn't make any noise, but it made the house vibrate," said Mrs Purcival.

Kirsty's 10-year old sister and 6-year old brother also claimed to have seen the UFO. Checks with the RAAF bases at Williamstown and Richmond as well as Air Headquarters at Glenbrook failed to shed any light on the mystery sightings.

Other than a helicopter, flying 20 kilometres out to sea, official sources said no other aircraft are known to have been in the area at the time of the sightings. The same sources were also unable to comment on a report that a US experimental 'lifting body' craft had been conducting night time test flights in the area.

(*Central Coast Sun Weekly* the 'paper with personality', 30 April 6 May 1992)

The UFO topic continued to emerge from time to time in the following weeks:

UFO was not lightning

Reports that a UFO 'seen' off Norah Head last week could have been 'ball lightning', have been proved incorrect by a high-tech system recently installed on the Coast.

Data provided by Kattron, an Ourimbah based company which operates Australia's first Lightning Positioning and Tracking System (LPATS), shows there was no storm activity in the area at the time of the alleged sightings.

"I don't know what the object was but it wasn't lightning," said Kattron's managing director, Ken Ticehurst.

Using the LPATS to graphically replay the storm on a computer screen, Mr Ticehurst was able to show that the nearest lightning was at least a couple of hundred kilometres away between Coonamble and Wagga Wagga.

But shedding light on UFO sightings is by no means the main purpose of the LPATS. Mr Ticehurst imported the advanced technology from the USA and setup the system at Ourimbah in December 1991.

It can provide precise information on storm progress, intensity, speed and direction and can pinpoint a lightning strike to within 200 metres. He said LPATS is being used as a 'risk management tool' by a wide range of industries and other organisations.

(*Tuggerah Lakes News*, 7 May 1992)

Although UFOs were reported fairly regularly most nights at this time, there was a complete media break of almost two weeks before the UFO phenomenon re-emerged. This time,

the journalistic acknowledgment was both grudging and superficial:

This UFO thing has gotten out of hand. We understand a certain kite enthusiast had one up around dusk earlier this week, fairly high, trying to excite a report.

(*Tuggerah Lakes News*, Wednesday 13 May 1992 from the 'Heard in Passing' column)

UFO investigators are familiar with the old 'kite ploy' UFOR (Queensland) reported that exactly the same approach had been tried by the south-east Queensland media the week before.

We noted with interest an article and photograph in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on Thursday 14 May 1992, which reported armed forces exercises being held out to sea off Jervis Bay, some 200 km south of Gosford. The guided missile frigate HMAS Melbourne was shown firing one of two Harpoon-type missiles (each worth \$1,000,000 apiece) during daylight, on Wednesday 13 May 1992.

However, the nocturnal UFO phenomena persisted, and Central Coast newspapers again began to report accounts of unusual lights:

UFOs make return trip

UFOs which buzzed Toukley two weeks ago made a return trip this week. Observers reported mysterious sightings on Wednesday night to Toukley Police Station.

At 7 pm a Toukley man, 31, and his daughter, 12, saw 'a mother ship' off Norah Head. It was round and spinning with green and white lights.

Several smaller objects appeared to disembark and head off towards Birdie Island. The man said he saw the UFO again at 8.45 p.m.

The second sighting almost coincided with an encounter reported by two Toukley fishermen, both 25. They were fishing at Soldiers Beach at about 8.30 p.m. when they saw an extremely bright light off Crack-neck Point to the south.

The UFO 'separated into two vertical formations' before one lightheaded north. The men said it hovered over The Entrance and passed over their heads before continuing north at very high speed.

The latest reports followed a spate of sightings on April 28. Toukley and Wyong Police Stations took more than 15 calls from Toukley, Budgewoi, Norah Head and Rocky Point.

(*Central Coast Express*, Friday 15 May 1992)

The interest created finally encouraged one brave journalist to provide the following, personal UFO account:

Hovering white lights: a close encounter on the Central Coast

The skies appear to have been very active of late.

For the past couple of weeks, several reports of unusual and often inexplicable lights in the evening sky have come from the Central Coast area. Sightings have also been made in Brisbane and Sydney.

But the people who publicly acknowledge and describe their experiences find themselves the subject of ridicule and derision. I should know. I am one of those people.

But I simply cannot forget my recent 'encounter', and cannot accept that what I saw was part of an RAAF exercise.

It happened as my husband and I were returning from Sydney on Sunday, May 3. It all began as we were driving north along the expressway, about 40 km before the Cessnock-Maitland turnoff. It was about 6 p.m. and the sky was quite dark and very clear. I could see quite a few aircraft heading in various directions.

Suddenly, a vibrant white light appeared not far above us and to our right. It was flashing intermittently. Below it was a faint display of green and red lights, and my immediate thought was that they extended much wider than those on a normal aircraft. But the really strange thing about the light was that it seemed not to move. It appeared to be hovering.

An aircraft approaching, we thought. But it remained the same size and seemed really quite close. It remained in position for at least three minutes, possibly more. When these experiences occur, you don't think immediately that you should be noticing details.

When I later described the hovering light to an officer of the RAAF at Williamstown, he discounted it as an approaching aircraft. But our speed of 110 kmh would surely put us out of its direct range during that three-minute interval?

Anyway, it then began to behave in an even more bizarre fashion. It suddenly turned and flew over in front of us to our left. But, at what a speed!

'I've never seen anything travel so fast,' I remarked, suddenly even more amazed. 'And look where its going. It looks as though it is going to crash.'

It seemed to descend right into the adjoining bushland. We were quite sure there was no airport nearby, and no plane would approach a landing at such a speed anyway.

But then, within seconds, it was back up above us to our right, exactly as it had been before. The white light was as strong as ever. It did not change size. And it continued to flash.

Two or three minutes later, now completely enthralled, we decided to pull to the side of the road to take a better look. I also wanted to see if it was making a noise. We could not imagine that it was a helicopter because of the speed at which it had travelled. Surely if it were an air force jet it would make its familiar roar.

But no. Admittedly we were beside the expressway, but it was not too busy and the craft was quite close. I simply could not detect a sound.

About 30 seconds after I left the car the lights, still indeterminable in form, departed to the south.

They moved quite slowly at first, then gathered speed, but went nowhere near as fast this time. For an aircraft, it was still quite low.

The next morning when I telephoned the RAAF base, a spokesman said that exercises had been conducted the night before, so, that was that, we thought.

But somehow, it just didn't gel. The speed, the hovering, the noiselessness. And the way the whole experience was haunting me.

After further investigation, I found a UFO report centre in Sydney and chatted to the woman who voluntarily staffs the service. She was interested, especially in the light of the recent spate of reports. She told me that my experience correlated almost exactly to many reports she had received in the past. And now further reported sightings have come from Toukley.

On the evening of Wednesday, May 13, two separate reports were lodged at Toukley Police Station.

There may be some perfectly prosaic explanation but, kite-fliers and military exercises notwithstanding, I for one cannot think of it.

(*Newcastle Herald*, Wednesday 20 May 1992)

The reporter had actually telephoned UFOR(NSW) and provided a verbal account of her experience within two days of its occurrence.

Meanwhile, other papers were having difficulty with the 'little green men' approach, and started siding with the kite option:

Spotted any UFOs Better go fly a kite

Its official! Little green men are not trying to make contact with Central Coast residents, much to the relief of The Entrance police.

Residents believed UFOs which buzzed Norah Head three weeks ago had made a return visit to Crackneck Point near Bateau Bay.

But the source of the UFOs was actually over The Entrance beach.

Brett Phillips has just set up Dizzy Heights Kites on The Entrance Rd and takes partial responsibility for the sightings.

A rather amused spokesman for The Entrance police revealed that Brett's kites were the actual cause.

He said police were relieved at the revelation because they had received so many calls from residents.

After the UFO publicity last week, Brett notified police that he had been flying his kites at night.

"They asked me if I could inform them each time I fly them because they were swamped with calls," Brett said.

"All the nights I have been out there has been a hell of a response from people calling the police.

"Chemical substances in the tubes I attach to the tails light up brightly at night, plus I use spinners and all sorts of gadgets.

"It wasn't deliberate. I work at the shop during the day and can't play with my kites until after dark so I like to put something on then so I can see them."

Explaining their height, Brett says aviation laws allow him to fly kites up to 90 metres in the air.

The publicity over his kites means he will organise a UFO display within the next month where he will invite locals to join him.

All they need is a kite, he will have the brightly coloured gear.

Brett flies his kites most nights at Memorial Park or near The Entrance channel.

(*Central Coast Express*, Wednesday 20 May 1993)

He's got UFOs on a string

He's generated enough interest to make the evening television news, but kite flyer Brett Phillips said he never intended to cause a UFO scare.

"I just put lights on my kites to see what I was doing," Brett said.

Brett is the proprietor of Dizzy Hytes kite shop at The Entrance, and by the time he finishes work and heads for the waterfront to fly his handiwork, it's pretty late in the day.

"But I will admit, once the UFO rumours had started, I thought it might generate some interest."

It did just that. One restaurant at the Entrance was deserted on Saturday night (16 May), as customers rushed outside to view the mystery lights.

The kite manufacturer and retailer said the publicity paid off, when hundreds of people crowded the beach at The Entrance on Sunday to view the kite spectacular.

"A couple of local retailers told me it was the best day's trading they'd had for ages, so it benefited a lot of people," Brett said.

"I've notified the police beforehand so they would know what was going on, and I keep the kites down to the legal limit of 300 feet, not the 1000 as quoted on the television news."

He's used lights on his kites before, but never had a response like this.

The kites weren't the only source of UFO reports.

A number of people have released balloons in The Entrance area, carrying coloured lights.

"I've been doing it for a couple of weeks, after the first reports started coming in," Brett said.

"I suppose I've been responsible for about 90 per cent of the sightings."

"The other 10 per cent who knows?"

(*Tuggerah Lake News*, 20 May 1992)

Balloons with lights attached had also been suggested as a cause in Queensland beforehand. After checking the brand of the chemical 'starlight' tubes Brett used, we contacted the manufacturer who told us that these are very low-power devices, probably only visible to within one or two kilometres.

At this point, the kite story started developing numerous inconsistencies as 'details' emerged:

Direct line to aliens (by Sharron Olivier)

Fears that the Central Coast was about to be invaded by creatures from outer space were dispelled when a fleet of UFOs was identified as a high-flying, illuminated kite. Switchboards at local police and radio stations were jammed with calls from hundreds of night-sky watchers who reported bright, flashing lights, hovering over the Tuggerah Lakes area.

Brett Phillips, proprietor of Dizzy Hytes kite shop at The Entrance, explained how he carried out the most spectacular of his "light shows" last Saturday.

Firstly, he got out his sewing machine and made up a 30-square metre kite.

To this he attached 200 'starlights', (tubes filled with fluorescent chemicals).

"I spent two days plotting a course from Toowoomba Bay to Long Jetty, to make sure

the kite wouldn't get tangled in wires or anything," said Brett.

"Then it was just a matter of attaching the kite line to the seat of my bicycle.

"I started out at about 10 pm and finished between 11.30 pm and midnight."

Brett controlled his enormous creation from a distance of half a kilometre, allowing it to soar three hundred metres into the air.

He said he had flown smaller, illuminated kites in the area for the past three weeks, but does not claim responsibility for all of the recent reports of UFO sightings.

"I heard about the UFO reports before I started doing this," he said.

A check of relevant dates and times confirmed that Brett's kites could not possibly account for many of the recent 'sightings', especially those reported from residents at Narara, Wyoming, Ettalong and Umina.

(*Central Coast Sun*, Thursday 21 May 1992)

Surprisingly enough, UFON(SW) didn't get any reports of UFOs from Saturday 16 May. We can only assume that after their initial surprise, the restaurant clients were insufficiently impressed to report the incident.

Meanwhile, *The Central Coast Sun Weekly* had also decided to go straight for the funny bone, but in a different way:

Alien interest in real estate

A Toukley estate agent has claimed that a visit this week to the Central Coast by aliens was not made to invade our space, simply to look at the possibility of acquiring some of it. George Butcher, from The Professionals, said he received a call by inter-galactic telephone from Mr and Mrs Martian to arrange a special after hours property inspection. This was done he said to prevent unnecessary media attention. Mrs Martian was reported to be very impressed with a three-bedroom brick home with family room and garage at Gorokan, priced at \$125,000. Mr Butcher said the couple have now returned to their own planet to rake up the necessary deposit.

(*The Central Coast Sun Weekly*, Thursday 21 May, for 21-27 May)

Oh well, there goes the neighbourhood. The alien 'real estate' angle died very quickly. Despite its popularity with both the media and police, the 'kite solution' seemed to create as many problems for the public as it tried to answer. Within one week, UFOs were firmly back in the news:

Sky lights 'probably from jets'

Mysterious red lights in the sky over Newcastle last night were probably navigation lights of Macchi jet aircraft practising formation flying for a funeral flypast on Friday.

Both the RAAF and *The Newcastle Herald* switchboards were inundated with calls between 10 pm and 10.30 pm.

Most of the callers said they had seen five or six red lights in the sky, travelling from west to east and heading out to sea.

At 10.45 pm Newcastle police said they had been told the lights were from Macchi aircraft which would take part in a flypast during the funeral on Friday of Hornet pilot Flying Officer Robert Jepsen, who died in a crash at Rockhampton on May 19.

(*The Newcastle Herald*, Tuesday 26 May 1992)

No mention of kites! This was followed the very next day by:

'UFO' lights over city weren't RAAF jets

Mysterious lights in the sky over Newcastle on Monday night were definitely not caused by aircraft from Williamtown, an RAAF spokesman said yesterday.

Wing Commander Ed Baldwin said no aircraft were operating from Williamtown at the time the lights were seen, apparently by scores of people.

A Newcastle police officer told *The Newcastle Herald* on Monday night that he had been told the lights were those of Macchi jets practising for a flypast during the funeral on Friday of Williamtown pilot Flying Officer Robert Jepson, whose Hornet crashed near Rockhampton on May 19.

Wing Commander Baldwin said that even if a flypast did take place, Hornets would be used, not Macchis, and in any event pilots would not practice close formation flying at night.

He said the lights could have been attached to weather balloons, or even kites, as had happened recently on the Central Coast, when a kite-flying enthusiast had generated a spate of UFO sightings.

An amateur video of the lights, made by a Maitland man, had not been of any use in identifying them, Wing Commander Baldwin said.

'All it showed was a row of dots,' he said. Mrs Deborah Ferguson of Alnwick Street North Lambton, was one of a number of people who contacted *The Herald*.

She said she had seen seven orange lights in two groups, apparently coming from the direction of BHP.

'I saw five lights in a line, which waited until two others caught up, then they all headed towards the coast,' she said.

The Newcastle Herald, Wednesday 27 May 1992.

And later in the same issue of *The Newcastle Herald*:

Sky-watching Professor Colin Keay, of Newcastle University, is intrigued about a remarkable coincidence to do with the recent rash of UFO sightings. The latest sighting was Monday's mystery red lights over Newcastle. 'The number of telephone calls I've taken started to rise five to seven weeks ago. That was immediately after the TV stations each ran what I call 'beat up' programs on reported flying saucer sightings,' he said.

(*The Newcastle Herald*, 'Topics' column with Mike Scanlon, 27 May 1992)

Once the 'kite' ploy failed, it was back to the 'misguided witness' approach. Professor Colin Keay is the Associate Professor of Physics at the University of Newcastle, and an astronomer. He is also the President of the Hunter Region branch of Australian Skeptics and a regular contributor to *The Skeptic*. Mike Scanlon did not bother to point this out to his readers. Perhaps this would have made this apparently casual contribution seem less casual. It is also a pity that Professor Keay did not take up a unique opportunity to do some field investigations on UFOs.

Mike Scanlon continued the 'Topics' commentary the following week:

Has a Valentine man solved the mystery of Monday night's mysterious orange lights reported over Lambton, Mayfield, and even Maitland and witnessed by scores of people? We knew that the 'UFO lights' weren't RAAF jets, so what were they? *Topics* hears from a lakeside man that when he was picking up his girlfriend between 10 and 10.30 that night at Newcastle University he noticed a bonfire down by the football oval. Two or three people appeared to be igniting 'lengths of rope, two at a time and sending them skywards'. He presumed they were releasing possibly small burning ropes soaked in oil and attached to helium balloons. Soon after, of course, Williamtown took 40 calls in 30 minutes 'about the orange lights'. Sorry folks, no green men from Mars this time around.

(*The Newcastle Herald*, 'Topics' column with Mike Scanlon for 28 May 1992)

We noted here that the previous Monday's red lights had now turned orange, and were intrigued by the fact that the same 'burning rope' trick had also been tried by the media in south-east Queensland only days earlier, after it was suggested by sceptics there. We suppose that good sceptical news travels fast.

And from the same 'Topics' column (as if to prove the matter was 'just a bit of harmless fun' beyond all reasonable doubt):

Earlier, a genial Jim Page from Raymond Terrace, showed me a British newspaper clipping from 57 years ago. 'Eerie flashes in the sky', read the headline from April 6 1935, regarding mystery lights seen for weeks near Guildford. 'That was me when I was 12' said Jim. 'It was just for fun, not done to deceive anyone. I'd send up a paper kite with lights run by a battery. It was a fad though, and I stopped when I ran out of money to buy batteries.' And guess what this spark did when he grew up? Why naturally he became an electrician.

(*The Central Coast Sun Weekly*, for 21 May-27 May 1992)

And from the same edition of *The Central Coast Sun Weekly*, page 4 (in personality Mike Willesee's column) — one last appeal to 'reasonableness' using the kite ploy:

UFO fever: It was the talk of the Coast last week. My boy Jesse said he'd seen it three nights in a row through his bedroom window. Rob and Tracey at our local store had customers tell them they'd seen it as well. They were all right of course, it was an Unidentified Flying Object, but as it turns out it was nothing as sophisticated as an intergalactic space craft, just a simple kite with glow sticks attached. Jesse was disappointed.

So there you have it. Just more harmless fun, and soon forgotten. And with that, the Central Coast flap was largely over, bar a few occasional outbreaks, charges and counter charges printed into late May and June 1993.

Essentially, this flap ended the way all of these flaps do. The reports just run out when there are no more UFOs seen to report, and when the opportunists (kite fliers et al) can no longer make an easy buck.

Fortunately, UFOR(NSW) did not have to just rely on the information the local newspapers had provided. Several of us were able to make weekly trips to the area to locate eyewitnesses and record their accounts for ourselves. The most interesting of these cases are reported on pages 15-18. □

New Magnetic Materials Testing Laboratory

The University of New South Wales now has a laboratory for testing materials using intense pulsed magnetic fields. The National Pulsed Magnet Laboratory (NPML) was officially opened in April 1992. It will be used to investigate a wide range of magnetic and electronic properties in high-tech materials, such as semiconductors and high-temperature superconductors.

At present most of this non-destructive testing is done in European and US laboratories using steady magnetic fields. These kinds of facilities are far too expensive for Australia to develop. The main problem has always been keeping such strong magnetic fields truly constant for any length of time.

However, local scientists are using a slightly different approach. Most steady-field tests can still be made using a pulsed magnetic field facility. Furthermore, much stronger fields can be quite readily generated this way (more than twice as strong as that for most steady-field facilities), and fewer resources are needed. This cost-reduction makes the NPML a very attractive proposal.

The new facility works in with the Low Temperature and Optical Spectroscopy laboratories already in existence at the University. This means that researchers will have a number of physical extremes for testing purposes — intense magnetic fields, high hydrostatic pressures, and supercold temperatures close to absolute zero. The most up-to-date devices such as lasers can be used for measurement.

The facility generates magnetic fields of up to 60 tesla, with two principle magnet stations running in parallel — one at 35 tesla for one second, and the other at over 60 tesla for 10–40 milliseconds. (The earth's magnetic field is less than one ten-thousandth of a tesla.) Large capacitor banks are used to control energies of up to 1 Megajoule. The laboratory has been built like a reinforced concrete bunker and includes numerous safety features to handle the high energies involved.

The project is a co-development with the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, which has a similar, smaller facility. At present, research will concentrate on three main areas of great interest to physicists:

- ☐ Quantum semiconductor devices — the extremely small components required to build future generations of faster, more powerful electronic computers
- ☐ Conducting (and possibly superconducting) organic molecules, which can be tailor-made for specific applications
- ☐ High-temperature superconductors

The laboratory must also develop novel, fast measurement devices for this new type of technology, and will attract considerable attention from members of the international science and research community. Nikola Tesla fans, take note! ☐

UFO investigation and related organisations

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INUFOR (Independent Network of UFO Researchers)
PO Box 622
KOGARAH NSW 2217

UFO Investigation Centre (UFOIC)
PO Box W42
WEST PENNANT HILLS NSW 2125

UFORIC (UFO Research & Investigation Canberra)
PO Box 382
WODEN ACT 2606

ASTRO (Alternative Science & Technology Research Organisation)
PO Box 93
PADSTOW NSW 2211

VUFORS (Victorian UFO Research Society)
PO Box 43
MOORABBIN Vic 3189

Anomalies Research Centre (ARC)
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BALLARAT Vic 3350

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UFOR(Qld) Gold Coast Branch
PO Box 2749
SOUTHPORT Qld 4215

UFOR(Qld) Sunshine Coast Branch
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WURTULLA Qld 4575

UFOR(FNQ)
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UFO Afrinews (Gemini Publishing)
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NEAPR (New England Aerial Phenomena Research)
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Help wanted!

Do you have access to a computer, and some spare time? We need help preparing material for publication in the *UFO Reporter*, and for the UFOR(NSW) database.

If you can type and have access to an IBM-compatible or Macintosh computer, please telephone Bryan on (02) 332 1414.

Lost in Bass Strait: a review of the play *Sky*

Starring Henri Szeps, at the Glen Street Theatre, Frenchs Forest.

Fifteen years after the disappearance of pilot Frederick Valentich over Bass Strait, a critically-acclaimed Australian drama re-plays the UFO encounter and its repercussions for Sydney audiences.

The lights are dimmed over an empty stage. A giant wing is suspended in the air. Music begins — an old song suggesting a fondness for a past way of life. Slides of a growing boy and his parents play against the giant wing.

Then the tape plays a conversation between pilot and Air Traffic control — this is the last conversation of Frederick Valentich so familiar to many UFO investigators.

So begins *Sky*, a critically acclaimed one-man play inspired by Australia's most famous UFO case — the 1978 disappearance of pilot Frederick Valentich over Bass Strait.

On 21 October 1978, the 20-year old pilot was flying a single engined Cessna 182 aircraft from Melbourne to King Island some 140 km to the south. The reasons Valentich gave for the flight were to log more night-flying time, and to pick up some crayfish from local fishermen.

At 7.06 pm Valentich radioed Melbourne Air Flight Service and asked if there was 'any known traffic' in his area. There wasn't. Valentich described a large aircraft with four bright lights passing 1000 feet above him.

Three minutes later he reported, 'Aircraft, ... it's not an aircraft ... it's ...' (break in transmission), followed by controller Steve Robey asking, 'Can you describe aircraft?'

Valentich: 'It's flying past. It has a long shape. Cannot identify more than that ... coming for me right now. It seems to be stationary. I'm orbiting and the thing is orbiting on top of me. It has a green light and sort of metallic light on the outside.'

Valentich then said that the object had vanished. At 7.12 pm, he reported his engine was 'rough idling and coughing'. His final transmission was, 'Delta Sierra Juliet Melbourne ...' followed by 17 seconds of a loud metallic sound. An extensive search of Bass Strait failed to turn up any trace of the pilot or his plane.

The incident became more perplexing when others reported UFO sightings on the same day. It also emerged that Roy Manifold, a holiday maker near Apollo Bay had taken six photographs of the setting sun just 20 minutes before Valentich first reported the strange aircraft. One of the photos showed a 'dense, black lump' stirring up the surface of the sea, and then a couple of frames later, an unusual cloud-like mass in the air.

Some 14 years later, *Sky* enjoyed its first successful performing seasons in both Sydney and Melbourne. One year later, Henri Szeps is back in Sydney

with a new season of the play. Szeps is probably best known to Australians for his television roles in the comedy series *Mother and Son*, and from the mini-series, *Palace of Dreams*.

For two hours (excluding one 15-minute intermission), Szeps delivers a concentrated and affecting performance as a father whose son has gone missing. The emotion ranges from humour to despair. The UFO encounter, the ensuing interactions with government bureaucrats and the media, the family context, and the personal repercussions are all explored.

The author, John Misto, had originally thought of producing a television series about mysterious phenomena, but ended up using some of this material to put together *Sky*. In this play Misto changes times and names — 1978 becomes Christmas 1987, and Szeps is the Italian immigrant Rocco Bettoni coming to terms with the loss of his son Frankie.

However, the initiating UFO incident is presented authentically. The dialogue between Valentich and the Control Tower is true. And those attempted 'official' explanations punctuate the plot: the plane accidentally being flown upside down with reflections from the sea being mistaken for mystery lights (even though the gravity-fed engine of a Cessna would run out of fuel in about 30 seconds); the disturbing possibility the son

might play a trick on his father; that the plane was shot down by an experimental US missile; and an outrageous suggestion (despite the lack of any evidence) of an involvement in drug-running.

Other episodes in the play portray uncooperative government officials, and the invasion of privacy by media concerns who do not let facts or ethics get in the way of a good story. The grotesque role of the tabloid media is recreated using the headlines of the day.

A fictional development dominates the second half of the play — Rocco Bettoni's temporary descent into madness with the imagery of the vulture of guilt clawing away at him. The real-life pilot's father, Guido Valentich, did not go mad, but he did want to believe his son was still alive — perhaps abducted by a UFO — rather than dead. Every year, on the anniversary of his son's disappearance, a newspaper story would appear, describing his solitary visit to Cape Otway (the point on the Australian mainland, nearest to King Island), to ponder and remember. Inevitably, one year a clairvoyant publicised claims of receiving messages from Valentich 'from the other side'.

Most of all, the play is about the personal repercussions of the loss of a child — the disbelief, the numbing shock, the self-doubts, the guilt, and the growing uncertainty of life and death.

In the Melbourne program note, John Misto extended the theme of the play to missing persons in general:

During the next ten years, 250,000 Australians will go missing. Between 5% and 10% of these people will never be located. And this,

apparently, is a conservative estimate. It is quite simply a modern epidemic.

People aren't supposed to disappear. It makes all of us nervous. As well as the grief, their families are forced to deal with ridicule, trickery, blame and innuendo. Their lives, not surprisingly, are usually devastated. They are often good and decent people who deserve better from fate and from us.

Because of this theme, *Sky* was chosen to be part of the 1992 Missing Persons Week.

The issue of dealing with 'ridicule, trickery, blame and innuendo' also indicates the fate of many UFO witnesses. It should make all sides of the UFO subject pause to seriously consider the ethical implications of their activities.

The play finishes with a deafening noise and a flash of green light as the pilot encounters his end.

The Department of Transport selectively released its sparsely-detailed 'Aircraft Accident Investigation Summary Report', dated 26 April 1983. The report stated the degree of damage to the aircraft was 'not known', and the degree of injury was 'presumed fatal'. It concluded: 'the reason for the disappearance of the aircraft has not been determined'.

There are obvious shortcomings in the Valentich case which weaken it more than many UFO enthusiasts are prepared to admit. The missing airplane means that the most vital physical evidence is lacking. The missing pilot means that even the central UFO witness has never been interviewed.

The hoax-suicide explanation cannot be ruled out either.

According to his father, Frederick believed in UFOs, claimed to have seen classified Air Force information on them, and to have seen a UFO several months previously. Valentich may even have taken his own scrapbook of UFO press clippings with him to the airport on the day of his last flight. Why? Whatever the reason, he was no naive UFO witness.

Despite the flaws of the case, it remains a genuine mystery, unlikely to ever be solved. Unless time and tide eventually disclose the pilot's fate.

Sky leaves a strong impression with its serious and powerful performance by Henri Szeps. Its stark, minimalist set allows the imagination to fill in the details. The computer-controlled changes in lighting and sound add to the dramatic impact. Perhaps, at two hours, the play is a little long. It may have been even more effective as a shorter, one-hour presentation. But it remains an effective drama. For those of us fascinated by ufology lore, its themes remain doubly interesting.

Mark Moravec,
Anomaly Research Centre,
Victoria

Addendum: Kyeemagh UFO, 1992

In the last issue of *UFO Reporter* we failed to provide the date of the Kyeemagh UFO sighting — it occurred on Sunday 19 April 1992 (Easter Day)